

# **PREPARING TO START YOUR REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**



**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY  
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# **INTRODUCTION**

This booklet contains information on speech-language pathology and audiology licensure in the State of California. Licensure is **required** to practice in both disciplines in most settings.

The exception to this requirement is when professional services are provided by a speech-language pathologist or audiologist who is **employed by and practicing in** a public preschool, elementary or secondary school and/or a federal facility.

We have attempted in this booklet to separate and define the various components of licensure. In California, this is referred to as Required Professional Experience or RPE.

If you also plan to seek certification from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, you should contact that organization for information on the requirements.

This booklet contains only the information necessary to apply for licensure. For information on additional aspects of licensure, please refer to the current statutes and regulations.

The following checklist represents the basic order of completion of the licensure requirements. Your clinical practicum and academic coursework must be completed prior to beginning the required professional experience (RPE). You may, however, complete the examination requirement while still a student or during your RPE period.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

- \_\_\_ Completion of Master's degree program or the equivalent (See Educational Requirements for definition of Master's degree equivalence)
- \_\_\_ Completion of Clinical Practicum

## **BEGIN LICENSURE PROCESS**

- \_\_\_ Immediately file the Temporary Required Professional Experience License Application form and fee (see section on required professional experience for additional details)
- \_\_\_ File a signed copy of page 2 of the RPE Acknowledgement Statement
- \_\_\_ \$35. application fee

## **SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING WITHIN 90 DAYS OF APPROVAL DATE**

- \_\_\_ Official transcripts of both bachelor's and master's programs sent directly to the SLPAB office
- \_\_\_ Page 2 of Live Scan request form completed by the live scan operator.
- \_\_\_ Completed and signed verification of clinical practicum
- \_\_\_ Examination score
- \_\_\_ Application for Licensure with passport quality photo, 3" x 3" attached
- \_\_\_ \$25. initial license fee

## **UPON COMPLETION OF THE REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- \_\_\_ Verification of Required Professional Experience

# **EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

## **APPROVED PROGRAM**

Possession of a Master's degree or the equivalent from an institution approved by the Board is the first basic requirement. An institution approved by the Board must meet one of the following requirements:

Accreditation by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

Or

holds accreditation status approved by the Board

## **MASTER'S EQUIVALENCE**

In lieu of a Master's degree, a student may apply for licensure on completion of equivalent coursework. The equivalent of a Master's degree as defined in Section 1399.152.1 of the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Regulations (Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations) reads as follows:

“...in lieu of a Master's degree an applicant may present evidence of completion of at least 30 semester units acceptable toward a Master's degree while registered as a graduate student in a degree program in speech-language pathology and/or audiology. At least 24 of the required semester units shall be completed at a single institution and shall be in speech-language pathology or audiology.”

The law requires applicants to submit evidence of completion of 24 semester hours (or 36 quarter hours) of coursework related to disorders of speech, voice or language for speech-language pathology applicants, or to disorders of hearing and the modification of communication disorders involving speech and language resulting from hearing disorders for audiology applicants. These 24 units may be taken at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

## **SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY COURSEWORK**

For speech-language pathology, the 24 semester units may be comprised of courses providing:

- 1) information about speech and language disorders, such as:
  - (a) various types of disorders of communication
  - (b) their manifestations
  - (c) their classification and causes
- 2) evaluation skills, such as procedures, techniques, and instrumentation used to assess:
  - (a) the speech and language of children and adults
  - (b) the basis of disorders of speech and language
- 3) management procedures used in habilitation and rehabilitation for children and adults with communication disorders.

In general, these courses must deal directly with principles and practices of speech-language pathology. These semester units do not include credit for thesis, dissertation or clinical practicum.

## **AUDIOLOGY COURSEWORK**

For audiology, the 24 semester units may be comprised of courses concerned with:

- 1) auditory disorders, such as:
  - (a) pathologies of the auditory system
  - (b) assessment of auditory disorders and their effect upon communication
- 2) habilitation/rehabilitation procedures, such as:
  - (a) selection and use of appropriate amplification, both wearable and group, for the hearing-impaired
  - (b) evaluation of speech and language problems for the hearing-impaired
  - (c) management procedures for speech and language habilitation and/or rehabilitation of the hearing-impaired (that may include manual communication)
- 3) conservation of hearing, such as:
  - (a) environmental noise control
  - (b) Identification audiometry (school, military, industrial)
- 4) instrumentation, such as:
  - (a) electronics
  - (b) calibration techniques
  - (c) characteristics of amplifying systems

In general, these courses must be concerned directly with principles and practices in audiology. It is suggested that no more than six of these units be exclusively concerned with the communication problems of hearing-impaired individuals. These semester units do not include credit for thesis, dissertation or clinical practicum.

## **RELATED COURSEWORK**

For both speech-language pathology and audiology, the law requires applicants to submit evidence of completion of 36 semester hours (or 48 quarter hours) of courses in related areas. Examples of courses creditable only in this area include courses dealing with the speech, language and hearing processes such as phonetics, anatomy and physiology, speech development, theories of hearing, etc.

Courses in speech-language pathology or audiology in excess of the 24 semester units required in the field may be credited toward this area. Courses designed to improve the communication proficiency of the student (e.g., voice and diction, speech communication, or public speaking) are not creditable. Semester units for thesis, dissertation and clinical practicum are not creditable toward the required coursework.

## **EXTENSION COURSES**

Credit for extension courses are acceptable only if they are a part of the regular graduate curriculum and are accepted toward a graduate degree by the educational institution attended. It is wise to obtain a letter defining the status of extension courses from the program director when the courses are completed if they are to be submitted toward licensure.

## **TRANSCRIPTS**

To be acceptable, all courses must carry a "C" grade or better. Proof of your academic coursework must be in the form of official transcripts sent directly to the Board office by your college or university. If you wish, the college or university may send the transcripts directly to you to forward to this office. However, if you send the transcripts in, the transcripts must be unopened.

# **CLINICAL PRACTICUM**

In order to be licensed you will need to submit evidence of completion, in conjunction with academic course requirements, of 300 clock hours of clinical experience in three different clinical settings. This experience should involve individuals representing a wide spectrum of ages and communication disorders. Clinical practicum in speech-language pathology must be gained under the supervision of a licensed speech-language pathologist and in audiology under the supervision of a licensed audiologist.

Both speech-language pathology or audiology majors may claim up to 25 clock hours in aural rehabilitation under the supervision of either a speech-language pathologist or audiologist.

For either a speech-language pathology or audiology major, up to 25 clock hours may be claimed in the field other than that for which the applicant is seeking licensure (speech-language pathology for an audiologist or audiology for a speech-language pathologist) if such clinical experience is supervised by an individual licensed in the minor field.

You may gain supervised clinical experience out-of-state or in an exempt setting (e.g., public elementary or secondary school or federal agency) (1) for speech-language pathology by a licensed speech-language pathologist or a speech-language pathologist having qualifications deemed equivalent by the Board; (2) for audiology by a licensed audiologist or an audiologist having qualifications deemed equivalent by the Board. "Qualifications deemed equivalent by the Board" includes a supervisor who holds a Certificate of Clinical Competence issued by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association in the field for which licensure is sought.

If you have any questions about a supervisor's qualifications, you may contact the Board office.

The clinical practice can be completed in a variety of settings: in a college or university speech and hearing clinic, in a hospital or community agency, in the public schools, etc. Supervision involves direct observation of your clinical work, preferably in some part of each session. Normally, only one student can gain clinical practicum credit from the same evaluation and therapy session.

Although observations, discussion with your supervisors, preparation time, and other related activities are important, they are not considered as actual patient practicum.

We urge you to keep careful records of your hours. Most programs have clinical logs to be completed and signed by the supervisor. We suggest that you use this information when applying for licensure.

## **REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE** **OR RPE**

When you have completed the coursework and clinical practicum requirements and are ready to begin your period of required professional experience, you should request from the Board a license application packet, which contains the Temporary Required Professional Experience License application form and RPE Temporary License Acknowledgement Statement. These two forms actually represents the first step in the license application procedure.

To be eligible for licensure, an applicant must submit evidence of no less than 36 weeks of full-time experience or 72 weeks of part-time experience in the area in which licensure is sought. This experience is referred to as the "required professional experience (RPE)". Full-time experience is defined as a minimum of 30 hours per week. Part-time experience is defined as a minimum of 15 hours per week. Consequently, 15-29 hours per week is credited as part-time according to the statutes.

Once your RPE temporary license application has been approved, a confirmation letter will be sent to both you and your supervisor. You will receive your actual temporary license approximately 4 weeks after the date of your approval letter. You will note that the approved dates on the letter will allow you to continue working as an RPE for an additional period of time beyond the usual 36 or 72 week period. This will provide you and your supervisor additional time to submit your verification form to the Board for processing and for the issuance of your official license.

If seeking licensure in speech-language pathology, this experience must be obtained under the supervision of a licensed speech-language pathologist. If seeking licensure in audiology, this experience must be obtained under the supervision of a licensed audiologist. This professional experience shall follow completion of the coursework and clinical practicum requirements described previously.

## **EXEMPT SETTINGS**

Although employment in the public schools and federal agencies is defined as exempt for the purposes of professional practice, recent statutory changes have enforced that all RPE experience must be completed under the RPE Temporary license issued by the Board. Note the following:

Effective July 1, 2003, any person obtaining their required professional experience for licensure in California must hold the RPE Temporary License regardless of the work setting. (i.e. employment in the public preschool, elementary or secondary school, VA hospital or other federal facility is no longer exempt for the purposes of completing the RPE.) While you can work in this setting it will not count towards your RPE until you have received written approval from this Board.



## NON-EXEMPT SETTINGS

If you plan to complete your RPE period in a setting where licensure is required, (e.g., a private practice, speech and hearing clinic, hospital, etc.), the statutes require that you submit your plan to the Board for approval **prior to** commencing practice. Experience obtained in violation of the laws and regulations will not be acceptable for the licensure requirements.

An RPE candidate who fails to file an RPE plan on a timely basis may be considered to be engaged in the unlicensed practice of speech-language pathology or audiology and may be subject to a citation and fine. The RPE supervisor may also be subject to discipline for aiding and abetting unlicensed practice.

If you find it necessary to change supervisors, each new supervisor must read and sign the Supervisor Responsibility Statement within 30 days. If your time base changes from full-time to part-time, please notify the Board in writing, as it may be necessary to amend the license expiration date.

## SUPERVISION REQUIRED

The RPE supervisor must provide a minimum of 8 hours per month direct supervision during full-time employment regardless of the setting. At least 50% of the supervisor's direct supervision (4 of the 8 hours) must be during the applicant's evaluation, assessment and treatment procedures.

For part-time employment, the RPE supervisor must provide a minimum of 4 hours per month direct supervision. At least 50% of the supervisor's direct supervision (2 of the 4 hours) must be during the applicant's evaluation, assessment and treatment procedures.

The remainder of the supervisory time for either full-time or part-time applicants may cover record keeping, evaluation, assessment, reports, treatment plans, summaries of case conferences, plans for management, etc.

At the end of the RPE, the supervisor is required to sign a form provided by the Board verifying the satisfactory or unsatisfactory completion of the experience.

**NOTE:** Experience obtained in a classroom setting where the RPE candidate is teaching academic subjects in addition to providing therapy the applicant can only receive part-time credit.

Application for Temporary Required Professional Experience License

<http://www.slpab.ca.gov/licensing/rpefor.pdf>

RPE Acknowledgement Statement [http://www.slpab.ca.gov/licensing/rpe\\_ack\\_state.pdf](http://www.slpab.ca.gov/licensing/rpe_ack_state.pdf)

Supervisor Responsibility Statement [http://www.slpab.ca.gov/licensing/sup\\_respons.pdf](http://www.slpab.ca.gov/licensing/sup_respons.pdf)  
(This form is used to report a change in supervisor only)

# **EXAMINATIONS**

All applicants for licensure must submit a passing score of 600 or more on the required specialty examination, speech-language pathology or audiology, administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) as part of The Praxis Series.

These examinations are offered at several sites throughout California and the U.S., according to an annual schedule set by ETS. Applications may be obtained from your college or university or by writing or phoning:

The Praxis Series  
Educational Testing Service  
P.O. Box 6051  
Princeton, NJ 08541-6051  
(609) 771-7395

The examination may be taken anytime within a 5-year period prior to filing an application for licensure or it may be taken while the Required Professional Experience (RPE) is being completed. As it takes approximately 6 weeks for ETS to process and mail out scores, it is **not** recommended that you wait until the end of your RPE to sit for the examination. There are no limits on the number of times the examination may be taken.

When filing for the examination it is suggested that you arrange to have a copy of your score sent directly to the Board office using the following address and Reporting Code:

Speech-Language Pathology  
And Audiology Board  
1422 Howe Avenue, Suite 3  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
  
Reporting Code: R8544

# **FINAL APPLICATION**

The Application for Licensure should be completed and returned to this office along with the \$25.00 initial license fee. You will also be required to submit a passport quality (bust photo) photograph, approximately 3" x 3" which is to be attached to the license application form.

Application for Licensure <http://www.slpab.ca.gov/licensing/licapp.pdf>

## **RPE VERIFICATION**

Upon completion of your RPE, your supervisor will need to submit the Required Professional Experience Verification form within 10 days. You may continue to work while your RPE Verification form is being reviewed and approved by the Board office provided that your RPE temporary license has not expired.

Once the approved RPE period is completed, it is illegal to continue to practice speech-language pathology or audiology unless your permanent license is issued (unless you are practicing in an exempt setting). **Therefore, it is extremely important to complete all the application procedures by the end of the RPE year.**

Required Professional Experience Verification form <http://www.slpab.ca.gov/licensing/rpevexp.pdf>

## **INITIAL LICENSE**

Following receipt and approval of all required information, the applicant will be issued a license to practice in California. The initial license is a permanent document suitable for framing. It bears the licensee's name and date of issue. It may be replaced for a \$25.00 fee, only in the event of loss or destruction of the original or a change of name. Licensees are also issued a pocket license, which is intended for use as proof of current licensure.

## **POCKET LICENSE & LICENSE RENEWAL**

Licenses must be renewed every two years and expire on the last day of the month of the licensee's second birthday following the initial issue date. Renewal notices are mailed approximately 90 days prior to the renewal due date. On receipt of the renewal fee, and certification of the required continuing professional development hours, a new pocket license is generated, which is valid for 2 years from the date of expiration.

## **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Twenty-four (24) clock hours of continuing professional development is required for license renewal every two years. The continuing professional development hours must be obtained by a continuing professional development provider approved by the Board or by an accreditation institution of higher learning, organizations approved as continuing education providers by either the American Speech-Language Hearing Association or the American Academy of Audiology, the California Medical Association's Institute for Medical Quality Continuing Medical Education Program. For more information regarding the Board's continuing professional development requirements, please click on the Continuing Education link.